

Sports-Related Head Injury and Concussion Prevention and Management Policy

It is the policy of the Newton School Committee to provide standardized procedures for protecting the health and safety of students in grades 6 through 12 incurring a head injury while involved in extracurricular athletic activities. Recognition of the frequency of head injuries among athletes, including concussion and traumatic brain injury (TBI), has increased with highly publicized cases of early dementia among professional football players. Massachusetts passed 105 CMR 201.000 to ensure that school systems take measures to prevent, train, manage, and make appropriate return to activity decisions for all students participating in extracurricular athletic activities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published figures for sports and recreation TBI-related emergency department visits from 2001-2009 (October 7, 2011 *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*). These visits increased 62% during this time period from 153,375 in 2001 to 248,418 in 2009; 6.6% of these visits resulted in hospitalization or transfer to another facility. Children ages 10-19 accounted for 70.5% of visits and boys 71%. Football accounted for the most TBI-related visits in boys 10-19 years old while soccer and basketball were the two most common sports for girls in this same age group.

Based upon these statistics and the Massachusetts law, the School Committee sets forth the following requirements for a school-based approach within our school system: annual head injury training for all athletic directors, certified athletic trainers, coaches, school nurses, parents, and students grades 6-12 participating in extracurricular athletic activities, pre-participation forms for all athletes listing a history of prior head injuries, system-wide baseline cognitive testing for comparison during follow-up care after an injury, prompt removal of any athlete suffering a head injury from practice or a game for no less than the day of the injury, completion of a head injury form, medical clearance forms to return to play, written graduated reentry plans for students determined to need accommodations for return to full activities including academics, proper record keeping in the school electronic health record monitored by the school nurse, and annual reporting of head injury statistics to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. It is especially important to recognize that head injuries can have consequences and may require accommodations for students related both to their athletic and academic programs. Protocols have been developed to accomplish these expectations, which need to be reviewed and revised as necessary, or at least every two years. See M.G.L. c. 111 §222; 105 C.M.R. 201.001 *et seq.*

Newton Public Schools
Sports-Related Head Injury and Concussion Prevention and Management
Protocol

Purpose of the Protocol:

This protocol reviews the steps required by all involved parties for prevention and management of sports-related head injury and concussion. Specific responsibilities are listed below by role. All categories of people involved, including parents and students, are required to complete annual training in the prevention and recognition of sports-related head injury and associated health risks. It is especially important to be aware of Second Impact Syndrome, a relatively recently recognized condition that can be lethal and can occur when an individual sustains another head injury before he or she has had time to completely heal a previously sustained brain injury.

The Athletic Director has the additional responsibilities of ensuring that all record-keeping is complete and that district statistics on head injuries are reported to the state. Coaches and/or certified athletic trainers must also complete Head Injury During Sports Season report forms, remove athletes who have suffered a head injury from practice or play, and communicate about the specific injury to the athlete's parents, the Athletic Director, and the school nurse. Schools nurses have the additional responsibilities to review forms and participate in developing a graduated reentry plan for athletes who have had a concussion. Parents must also submit a Head Injury Report form for any injury the student suffers outside of the extracurricular activity, participate in developing a graduated reentry plan, and submit a Medical Clearance form before their children can return to full activity.

This protocol will be reviewed at least every two years and revised as necessary. Should major developments in the recognition and management of head injuries occur, the School Committee policy would also be reviewed and revised if indicated.

Definitions:

Sports means extracurricular athletic activities including, but not limited to, cheerleading, marching band, ultimate Frisbee, in addition to more traditional competitive sports.

Head injury is defined as a direct bump, blow or jolt to the head or a fall or body blow that causes the head or brain to move abruptly back and forth. Head injury includes the categories of concussion and traumatic brain injury. Scalp or facial laceration alone is not a head injury.

Concussion is defined as a disturbance in brain function resulting from head injury without structural injury to the brain. An individual does not need to lose consciousness in order to suffer a concussion. Consequences from a concussion can vary dramatically depending on the individual. Concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is defined as a complex disruption of brain function following a direct blow or jolt to the head, penetrating brain injury or a blow to the body with significant force transmitted to the head. A TBI can result in short- or long-term effects on independent functioning. TBI includes, but is not limited to, a concussion.

Second Impact Syndrome is a potentially lethal condition that can occur when an individual sustains another head injury before he or she has had time to completely heal a previously sustained brain injury. This condition can arise from disruption of blood flow to the brain.

See 105 C.M.R. 201.005.

Protocol:

Athletic Director

1. Complete annual training, as required under M.G.L. c. 111 §222, in the prevention and recognition of sports-related head injury, and associated health risks including second impact syndrome.
2. Ensure record keeping for annual head injury safety training for staff, parents, volunteers, coaches and students.
3. Ensure that all student athletes submit an annual physical examination prior to participation in extracurricular athletics.
4. Ensure that all student athletes submit a Pre-participation form prior to each season.
5. Ensure that Report of Head Injury During Sports Season forms are used.
6. Annually report to Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) the number of Head Injury Forms collected and the number of students who incur head injuries and suspected concussions.

Coaches

1. Complete annual training, as required under M.G.L. c. 111 §222, in the prevention and recognition of sports-related head injury, and associated health risks including second impact syndrome.
2. Submit verification of completion of annual training to the Athletic Director.

3. Review Athletics Pre-Participation Concussion History and Screening Form to identify athletes at greater head injury risk.
4. Complete Report of Head Injury form for head injuries that occur during practice or competition and submit them to the school nurse.
5. Remove student athletes from play with head injuries that occur during practice or competition.
6. Communicate directly and in writing with parents of any student removed from play that occur during practice or competition.
7. Communicate with the Athletic Director and school nurse about any students removed from practice or competition for a head injury, suspected concussion, or loss of consciousness.

Certified Athletic Trainers

1. Complete annual training, as required under M.G.L. c. 111 §222, in the prevention and recognition of sports-related head injury, and associated health risks including second impact syndrome.
2. Submit verification of completion of annual training to the Athletic Director.
3. Review Athletics Pre-Participation Concussion History and Screening Form to identify athletes at greater head injury risk.
4. Review Report of Head Injury form for head injuries that occur during practice or competition and submit them to the school nurse.
5. Remove student athletes from play with head injuries that occur during practice or competition.
6. Participate in a graduated reentry plan for students diagnosed with a concussion.

School Nurses

1. Complete annual training, as required under M.G.L. c. 111 §222, in the prevention and recognition of sports-related head injury, and associated health risks including second impact syndrome.
2. Submit verification of completion of annual training to the Athletic Director.
3. Review Athletics Pre-Participation Concussion History and Screening Forms for head injury history and follow up with parents.

4. Review Report of Head Injury forms and follow up with coaches and parents.
5. Maintain Pre-participation forms and Report of Head injury forms in the school health record.
6. Participate in a graduated reentry plan for students diagnosed with a concussion.
7. Assist the Athletic Director in preparing an annual report to the MDPH.

Parents

1. Annually and for each extracurricular athletic activity, submit a signed Athletics Pre-Participation Concussion History and Screening Form that indicates completion of training, as required under M.G.L. c. 111 §222, regarding head injuries and concussions and up-to-date information about their child's concussion history especially any recent injuries suffered outside of extracurricular activities as well as head, face or cervical spine injury.
2. Submit a Head Injury Report Form for any head injury or concussion that occurs during the season outside of the extracurricular activity.
3. For any student diagnosed with a concussion, participate in developing a written, graduated reentry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular activities.
4. For any student removed from play due to a head injury, suspected concussion or loss of consciousness during practice or competition, submit a Medical Clearance Form to the school nurse before returning to play.

Student Athletes

1. Annually and for each extracurricular athletic activity, submit a signed Athletics Pre-Participation Concussion History and Screening Form that indicates completion of training, as required under M.G.L. c. 111 §222, regarding head injuries and concussions and up-to-date information relative to concussion history, head, face or cervical spine injury and co-existent concussive injuries.